

## Wage and Hour Division, Labor

## § 531.34

stores and commissaries (including articles of food, clothing, and household effects); fuel (including coal, kerosene, firewood, and lumber slabs), electricity, water, and gas furnished for the noncommercial personal use of the employee; transportation furnished employees between their homes and work where the travel time does not constitute hours worked compensable under the Act and the transportation is not an incident of and necessary to the employment.

(b) Shares of capital stock in an employer company, representing only a contingent proprietary right to participate in profits and losses or in the assets of the company at some future dissolution date, do not appear to be "facilities" within the meaning of the section.

(c) It should also be noted that under § 531.3(d)(1), the cost of furnishing "facilities" which are primarily for the benefit or convenience of the employer will not be recognized as reasonable and may not therefore be included in computing wages. Items in addition to those set forth in § 531.3 which have been held to be primarily for the benefit or convenience of the employer and are not therefore to be considered "facilities" within the meaning of section 3(m) include: Safety caps, explosives, and miners' lamps (in the mining industry); electric power (used for commercial production in the interest of the employer); company police and guard protection; taxes and insurance on the employer's buildings which are not used for lodgings furnished to the employee; "dues" to chambers of commerce and other organizations used, for example, to repay subsidies given to the employer to locate his factory in a particular community; transportation charges where such transportation is an incident of and necessary to the employment (as in the case of maintenance-of-way employees of a railroad); charges for rental of uniforms where the nature of the business requires the employee to wear a uniform; medical services and hospitalization which the employer is bound to furnish under workmen's compensation acts, or similar Federal, State, or local law. On the other hand, meals are always regarded as primarily for the benefit and con-

venience of the employee. For a discussion of reimbursement for expenses such as "supper money," "travel expenses," etc., see § 778.217 of this chapter.

### § 531.33 "Reasonable cost"; "fair value."

(a) Section 3(m) directs the Administrator to determine "the reasonable cost \* \* \* to the employer of furnishing \* \* \* facilities" to the employee, and in addition it authorizes him to determine "the fair value" of such facilities for defined classes of employees and in defined areas, which may be used in lieu of the actual measure of the cost of such facilities in ascertaining the "wages" paid to any employee. Subpart B contains three methods whereby an employer may ascertain whether any furnished facilities are a part of "wages" within the meaning of section 3(m): (1) An employer may calculate the "reasonable cost" of facilities in accordance with the requirements set forth in § 531.3; (2) an employer may request that a determination of "reasonable cost" be made, including a determination having particular application; and (3) an employer may request that a determination of "fair value" of the furnished facilities be made to be used in lieu of the actual measure of the cost of the furnished facilities in assessing the "wages" paid to an employee.

(b) "Reasonable cost," as determined in § 531.3 "does not include a profit to the employer or to any affiliated person." Although the question of affiliation is one of fact, where any of the following persons operate company stores or commissaries or furnish lodging or other facilities they will normally be deemed "affiliated persons" within the meaning of the regulations: (1) A spouse, child, parent, or other close relative of the employer; (2) a partner, officer, or employee in the employer company or firm; (3) a parent, subsidiary, or otherwise closely connected corporation; and (4) an agent of the employer.

### § 531.34 Payment in scrip or similar medium not authorized.

Scrip, tokens, credit cards, "dope checks," coupons, and similar devices